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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 2 July 2004 at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Aliyev (Vice-President)..... (Azerbaijan)**Contents****Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system**

- (a) Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

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In the absence of Ms. Risa (Finland), Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system

(a) Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2004/59; E/2004/NGO/19-22; E/2004/CRP.1-4)

1. **Ms. Hannan** (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2004/59), said that gender mainstreaming had been clearly established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality in the Beijing Platform for Action. The importance of gender mainstreaming was specifically mentioned in relation to all 12 of the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action, which had established that gender analysis should be undertaken on the situation of women, as well as men, in all areas before actions were taken.

2. In 1997, the Council had taken a critical step in translating that commitment from the Beijing Conference into practice. It had addressed specific recommendations to all actors in the United Nations system, spelling out the institutional requirements for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes. The importance of the gender mainstreaming strategy had been reinforced at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the implementation of the Platform for Action. Following the establishment of the critical framework for gender mainstreaming in the agreed conclusions 1997/2, the Council had continued to play a critical role in promoting gender mainstreaming.

3. The report provided an overall analysis of gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and at the intergovernmental level since 1997. It highlighted

achievements, gaps and challenges that the Council might wish to focus on in the review and appraisal of implementation. The report concluded that gender mainstreaming remained a critical strategy for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and that the Council's agreed conclusions remained a valid framework for gender mainstreaming and should continue to guide the efforts of the United Nations. While significant achievements had been registered, much remained to be done before the commitments on gender mainstreaming were fully implemented.

4. **Mr. Van den Berg** (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and, in addition, Iceland, said that gender equality was not just an important goal in itself, but also a means to achieving and sustaining development; it was indispensable for the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, no society could truly prosper if it left the talents of half its population behind.

5. The European Union reaffirmed its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the United Nations. In the past decade, progress had been made in the field of gender mainstreaming. In that regard, the European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's report and its overview of progress made and obstacles met. Awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming had increased, but that in itself was not sufficient. While gender focal points had been established, all too often gender remained a separate subject with an audience of its own. Accordingly, the European Union welcomed the self-critical look that the United Nations had taken. Key to implementing the agreed conclusions was clear accountability of management at various levels in the United Nations system. Gender mainstreaming should be a major consideration in the assessment of individual performance. A sound monitoring system was crucial in that respect but had been identified as one of the weakest areas, making it harder to measure progress and to pass judgement on accountability. Sound reporting was required to overcome that obstacle. To ensure an effective implementation of the two-pronged

gender equality strategy, the United Nations must allocate sufficient human and financial resources.

6. Expressing appreciation for the work done by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, he noted that her role was to make sure that the system functioned properly. The European Union considered such a mandate indispensable and looked forward to the early appointment of a new Special Adviser. Furthermore, the catalytic role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) as enabler and facilitator needed to be strengthened. Ultimately, gender concerns needed to be mainstreamed more firmly at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations bodies and agencies.

7. The European Union welcomed the inter-agency coordination and cooperation that had been established to promote gender equality and encouraged the Chief Executives Board to take the lead role in further promoting the objective of gender equality through gender mainstreaming in all United Nations policies and programmes. The normative and operational activities of entities of the United Nations system contributed to the implementation of the legal framework agreed upon by States, including the integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights into policies and programmes of United Nations agencies, to which the European Union remained fully committed.

8. The European Union considered it extremely important that in implementing the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences, the focus should continue to be on how gender-specific concerns could be better integrated into policies and interventions. It also stressed the importance of gender mainstreaming in conference follow-up and emphasized the role of the intergovernmental process. As the international community embarked on the preparations for the "major event" in 2005, gender mainstreaming should be regarded as one of the leading strategies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the results of recent United Nations conferences and summits.

9. The European Union appreciated the efforts of the Council's subsidiary bodies in addressing gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in the areas of work and valued the catalytic role of the Commission on the Status of Women in that respect. The Council's agreed

conclusions of 1997/2 had borne fruit since the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping had made considerable efforts to reflect gender concerns in its work. Furthermore, the European Union welcomed the declaration on violence against women by the women Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other government representatives during the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights and commended the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for devoting special attention to indigenous women at its recent meeting in May. The European Union shared the concern of the Forum about the multiple forms of discrimination against indigenous women.

10. The cross-cutting obligation to eliminate inequalities and promote equality between women and men had been enshrined in the European Union's basic documents. The Union's present strategy sought to build synergy between legislation, gender mainstreaming and funding tools. The dual approach of mainstreaming, coupled with specific actions, had been adopted for several European Union processes, such as the European Employment Strategy, the structural funds and development cooperation. The European Commission's efforts in that area were explicitly linked with the Millennium Development Goals, thus fostering closer collaboration between the Commission and the European Union member States, the United Nations and other development agencies.

11. The accurate measurement of progress was vital, and the European Commission currently presented an annual report on progress towards gender mainstreaming in policy areas to European Union heads of State and Government. In conclusion, the European Union welcomed the fact that the Council intended to reiterate the importance of gender mainstreaming and reaffirm the validity of its agreed conclusions from 1997, while addressing the gaps and identifying measures to accelerate implementation, including through action plans and time lines.

12. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) welcomed the ongoing efforts and the progress achieved in mainstreaming a gender perspective into the policies and programmes of the United Nations system. Commitment to mainstreaming the gender perspective must be at the highest level in order to ensure its full and effective implementation. Furthermore, mainstreaming must be institutionalized and

universally applied to all parts and at all levels of the United Nations system. It was essential to commit adequate resources, particularly for the developing countries, for the sustained institutional development of the process and for the establishment of effective mechanisms to ensure accountability through regular monitoring and evaluations systems.

13. Gender balance in all categories of posts within the United Nations system was also relevant, especially at senior and policy-making levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Other kinds of balances, including ethnic, cultural and religious, were of paramount importance. Progress towards that goal must also take into account the continuing lack of representation or underrepresentation of women from certain countries, particularly from the developing world.

14. Pursuant to its commitments at Beijing, Bangladesh had made gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment key components of its major policies. A mechanism had already been institutionalized for mainstreaming women in development programmes in all national plans and projects. In addition to a separate Ministry for Women's Affairs, every government department had a separate unit for women in development programmes. The Government had adopted a national women's development policy aimed at equality, empowerment and advancement of women in all spheres of national life. Other innovative indigenous ideas, such as microcredit, had helped the process. Such economic empowerment had also translated into political power for women. Indeed, over the past 15 years, voters had elected a woman head of government, a woman head of opposition and over 13,000 women to local office.

15. With the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the Security Council had recognized the importance of the gender issue in its work, thus contributing to a number of positive developments in terms of mainstreaming gender issues in post-conflict peace efforts and developments. Efforts should continue to ensure full implementation of that resolution.

16. The Economic and Social Council should continue to play a leading role in monitoring gender mainstreaming in all its functional bodies, keeping in mind the need for a coordinated approach, particularly in the implementation of the outcomes of the major

international conferences. While the Council and the General Assembly should provide the overall policy guidance in that respect, the Commission on the Status of Women, as the focal point entrusted with monitoring implementation of the outcomes of the Beijing Conference, should continue to play a catalytic role. Furthermore, international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the regional development banks, had an important role to play in supplementing the efforts of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies. It was time for them to exhibit a greater proactive commitment in that regard.

17. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) welcomed the fact that the existence of gender policies in United Nations entities had increased awareness and provided the necessary framework for gender mainstreaming. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions 1997/2, most United Nations entities had developed institutional mechanisms to facilitate effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. The agreed conclusions and the Beijing Platform for Action also placed emphasis on women in armed conflict. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. In that regard, his delegation noted with appreciation that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had taken steps to incorporate a gender perspective in its operations.

18. Practical implementation of the agreed conclusions remained a challenge. Although several functional commissions had adopted specific decisions to mainstream gender perspectives in their work, gender issues had not been given fair consideration by the various subsidiary bodies of the Council. His delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council and its functional commissions should take measures to ensure that gender mainstreaming was adequately incorporated in the outcomes of the intergovernmental deliberations. While each sector had a unique approach, there was a need to harmonize gender mainstreaming activities. He concurred with the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report but wished to recommend that in future reports to the Council and to the Commission on the Status of Women should elaborate further on the issue of gender balance and provide statistics on the number and percentage of women at all levels throughout the United Nations. He called on the

Council to ensure that the goal of reaching a 50/50 gender distribution in the United Nations system, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, was achieved. Gender equality should be viewed as both a social issue and a cross-cutting concern, and the outcomes of the intergovernmental deliberations should reflect that.

19. **Mr. Copinathan** (India) said that General Assembly resolution 57/270 B on conference follow-up recognized the Council's role in the coordinated implementation of the outcomes and follow-up to major United Nations conferences. He agreed with the recommendation in the report that all agencies with mandates dealing with economic, social and environmental matters should promote further integration of rural development into their activities and programmes and should be provided with sufficient resources for the task. That would, in his view, help the developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

20. He wondered whether it would be feasible to design a coherent capacity-building programme for rural development, as recommended in the report of the Secretary General. His delegation had pointed out earlier that the people themselves as potential beneficiaries needed to be involved, not only in identifying their needs, but also in making decisions on how to meet those needs and thus improve their living conditions. Given the specificity of each country, he did not believe that it would be possible to arrive at a set of multilateral norms for rural development.

21. As stated in General Assembly resolution 58/129, partnership initiatives could complement but not replace the commitments made at the government level. It was therefore important for the efforts made through partnership initiatives to be aligned to programmes and priorities set by governments at the national level. The Millennium Declaration contained specific goals on girls' and women's education and health and identified the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development. The road map for implementation of the Millennium Declaration provided strategies for moving forward as did the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative launched by the Secretary-General in April 2000 at the Dakar World Education Forum.

22. Policies and programmes for the advancement and empowerment of women must be action-oriented and targeted. More recently, the Indian legislature had enacted laws to prevent sexual harassment at the work place. The national human rights machinery brought gender mainstreaming very much to the fore.

23. He noted from the report of the Secretary-General the efforts required to ensure full implementation of the agreed conclusions and noted the linkages between the goal of gender equality and the overall goals of the Millennium Declaration. While he appreciated the frankness of the report in its assessment of the capacity-building efforts in the United Nations, he believed that some focus on the status of women would have provided an update on improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system. It was necessary to take concrete action for ensuring adequate and equitable representation of women, particularly from the developing countries, at the higher levels of the United Nations structure.

24. **Mr. Shin Kak-soo** (Republic of Korea) said that his Government was committed to fully implementing gender mainstreaming in public policies, as was demonstrated by the evolution of the national machinery in charge of women's issues, which had gone from a ministry without portfolio, to a special committee under the presidential office, and late to the current full-fledged ministry of gender equality with an expanding portfolio. It was also fully supportive of gender mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations, not only as a goal in itself but also as a process from which good practices and lessons could be learned.

25. He welcomed the opportunity to review the implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 and appreciated the Secretary-General's report on the issue, as well as the many conference room papers; they provided a comprehensive overview of both the record of achievements and the challenges remaining. His delegation shared the overall assessment presented in the Secretary-General's report that while much progress had been achieved in terms of raising awareness, generating political will, and establishing policies and institutional arrangements for gender mainstreaming in the system, practical implementation remained a challenge. The gap between policy and implementation could only be bridged with renewed commitment at all levels of decision-making in the Organization as well as in the

intergovernmental processes that set the basic guidelines. He hoped that the result of the Council's current review would be a set of recommendations for focused action in pivotal areas that would give added impetus to the system-wide implementation of the agreed conclusions.

26. More specifically, he hoped to see greater attention and action in the following areas: the review and appraisal of the progress made toward implementing the Millennium Declaration; the implementation of the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women in promoting gender mainstreaming; and the integration of gender perspectives into peace operations, peace negotiations and peace-building initiatives.

27. His delegation applauded the contributions made by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in facilitating gender mainstreaming and capacity-building in the system and incorporating gender perspectives in their work programmes. He encouraged the Inter-Agency Network to continue in its facilitative role in promoting cooperation and developing tools, especially for monitoring and evaluation.

28. **Ms. Adjalova** (Azerbaijan) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and emphasized the importance of inter-agency coordination in the process of integrating gender perspectives into the overall policies of the United Nations system agencies. In her view, importance should be attached to the involvement of different categories of staff, including senior management, and establishing effective linkages between the strategy to achieve gender equality and the overall strategies of the respective agencies and institutions. She appreciated the efforts and progress made by the United Nations system in mainstreaming gender perspectives into programmes and operational activities.

29. The Secretary-General's report noted that gender perspectives were still not addressed in a systematic way and needed to be more widely reflected in overall development policies, including those on poverty eradication and macroeconomic development. She welcomed the fact that an increased proportion of the poverty-reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) gave attention to gender inequalities. However, once gender perspectives were reflected in PRSPs, their effective implementation required adequate resources.

Accordingly, she called upon the donor community to increase the level of resources allocated to the operational activities of the United Nations system at the national and international levels.

30. She noted with concern that, even where resources were available, programme and field staff often lacked the capacity to mainstream gender perspectives in their daily work. In that regard, support to capacity-building and dissemination of information on good practices and lessons would be crucial. She supported the Secretary-General's recommendations designed to ensure systematic and effective dissemination and utilization of good practices, increased sensitivity about gender mainstreaming (including on the part of senior management) and the integration of gender perspectives into all existing training programmes. The Organization should promote gender mainstreaming as a basic strategy in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all its policies and programmes.

31. **Ms. Ekwall** (Switzerland) said that gender mainstreaming was a national priority for Switzerland. She welcomed the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59), whose strength lay in its critical analysis and well-structured, constructive recommendations. It pointed out not only the achievements but also the important gaps between policy and implementation of gender mainstreaming in the system. While she shared the Secretary-General's views on how to fill those gaps, she felt that more could have been said about the current lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation and the need for gender-sensitive context analyses, sex-disaggregated data and measurable goals with time frames and indicators. Her Government emphasized the importance of practical tools and methodologies that were accessible to the technical staff and capable of supporting monitoring on a day-to-day basis. It regarded the commitment of senior management and the definition of the roles of staff members at all levels as a critical element for successful gender mainstreaming in United Nations entities. Last but not least, the necessary resources must be allocated; budget cuts should not be a reason for not giving priority to gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of an organization, especially when a number of actions involved few or no extra resources.

32. Her country welcomed the efforts made by the agencies to incorporate gender perspectives into their

programmes and operational activities. Of great concern, however, was the persistent lack of adequate attention given to the issue in such critical areas as poverty eradication, macroeconomic development, social protection, agriculture, rural development, peace and security. Moreover, identifying the gender perspective of poverty and integrating that dimension into the poverty reduction strategy processes as well as into the reporting on the Millennium Development Goals were essential.

33. **Mr. Owuor** (Kenya) said that, with three quarters of the world's poor in rural areas, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of rural development had become preconditions for meeting the Millennium Development Goals and achieving sustainable development. The rural areas in developing countries had inadequate facilities and services. In order to change that situation, resources must be invested in physical and social infrastructure, both to improve the productive capacity of rural areas and to create employment and wealth. Actions in that regard should focus on the quality and quantity of ODA, solutions to the debt problem and the promotion of FDI with emphasis on rural areas.

34. Agriculture was the main livelihood for rural areas, but the sector continued to encounter various impediments, including low and unstable prices and restrictions in the markets of developed countries. Unless the problems faced by commodities, such as tariff barriers and trade subsidies, were resolved, rural people would have little chance of improving their standard of living.

35. While rural and urban areas were supposed to be mutually supportive, the current rural-to-urban migration pattern was putting pressure on urban facilities and causing the mushrooming of slums, high unemployment and insecurity. It was therefore imperative to strike the necessary balance in development efforts to make rural areas as attractive as urban areas. To that end, the agencies must be given adequate resources to be able to carry out their mandates successfully.

36. His delegation would like to identify itself with the assertions by UNDP on the promotion of gender equality as one of the key factors in enhancing effective development in its multi-year programme 2004-2007. Lack of capacity-building, resources and accountability had been identified as holding back the

work of gender mainstreaming and it was of paramount importance to suggest concrete actions to allow for the implementation of that process. His delegation supported the decision to decentralize United Nations system operational activities at the field level, and it commended the good work being done for the poor and impoverished, especially those affected by hunger due to drought and those hit hard by the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

37. **Mr. Laurin** (Canada), speaking on behalf of New Zealand and Australia as well as Canada, expressed appreciation for the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to enhance capacities and promote coherence in gender mainstreaming throughout the system. While there had been progress in that area, the goal of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all programmes had yet to be achieved. The Secretary-General had noted that further efforts were required to ensure the full implementation of the agreed conclusions 1997/2. The significant gap between policy and practice would be overcome with sustained commitment at the highest levels of the United Nations system.

38. The Council and its functional commissions had reiterated that gender equality was a goal in itself, as well as a condition for the effective pursuit of their other mandates. The Security Council had made history with the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000); he encouraged all actors to work towards its full implementation. Gender perspectives must be brought to bear on all peace negotiations and peace-building initiatives, and throughout the mandates, policies and programmes of peace operations. He noted also the critical role of gender specialists in carrying out the measures prescribed by 1325.

39. The Commission on the Status of Women had recalled the commitment made in Beijing that men must take joint responsibility with women for the promotion of gender equality. The Commission's agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys called for fostering the involvement of men and boys in gender mainstreaming efforts in order to ensure improved design of all policies and programmes. That was especially important in those United Nations bodies and departments where the majority of delegates and staff were still men, such as the Security Council and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

40. Member States were also accountable for ensuring that the commitment to gender equality was reflected in the application of a gender perspective to the documents negotiated at the United Nations. His and other Governments were more committed than ever to the international consensus agreed to at Beijing in 1995. Progress towards the full implementation of the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women was essential to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Finally, he acknowledged the tremendous contribution made by Angela King as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and urged the speedy nomination of her successor.

41. **Mr. Takase** (Japan) said that since 1997 there had clearly been major developments in gender mainstreaming within United Nations entities. In that regard, he commended the work of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality for their leadership in ensuring the mainstreaming of gender perspectives at the policy and operational levels. He agreed that systematic attention to gender perspectives in intergovernmental processes would provide impetus for mainstreaming, and said that he was concerned about the weakness of existing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

42. His Government had established a Gender Equality Bureau as a secretariat for the promotion of gender equality, with responsibility for planning and overall coordination. Similarly, a high-level Council for Gender Equality, supported by a Specialist Committee for monitoring and handling complaints, was involved in implementing Government measures and advised the Prime Minister and Cabinet on issues relating to the basic plan for gender equality.

43. Japan hoped that the analysis of gender equality perspectives in the review and appraisal of the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals would be an important focus, and that the outcome would provide practical guidance for future endeavours.

44. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) said that, while the significant progress made by United Nations and intergovernmental entities was laudable, a greater effort should be made to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Indonesia recommended that training programmes should be tailored to incorporate poverty reduction, macroeconomics and sustainable development,

along with gender perspectives. The entire international community should render its commitment, support and accountability at the highest level.

45. Indonesia firmly believed that progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into all policies and programmes would determine to what extent the development goals and targets were achieved, and that the Millennium Development Goals themselves were mutually reinforcing. Special attention should be paid to the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

46. **Ms. Simonen** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women were the cornerstones of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and that UNFPA had been at the forefront of efforts to mainstream gender into development policies and programmes. Its work had focused on reproductive rights and sexual and reproductive health and their linkages with the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

47. As an organizational goal within the UNFPA multi-year funding framework, gender equality and empowerment were central to the human-rights-based and culturally sensitive approach that guided the Fund's policies and programmes in all areas.

48. Describing UNFPA activities aimed at implementing the policy on HIV/AIDS, she stressed gender as a focus of its public information campaign targeting young people, and its efforts undertaken in cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Women's empowerment and reproductive health issues in conflict and reconstruction situations, staff training in gender mainstreaming and building on positive cultural values were areas of particular relevance to the work of UNFPA. Partnerships, particularly within the United Nations system, were essential to gender mainstreaming. During the past year, UNFPA had expanded its collaboration with non-governmental bodies and civil society to enhance its performance at the country level.

49. In a 2003 global survey, UNFPA had found that countries in all regions had made considerable progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, in spite of a lack of resources and competing priorities. Legislative measures had been widely adopted, and such approaches had been bolstered by the introduction of gender issues into the education

system and the encouragement of male involvement. Nevertheless, much remained to be done with regard to the enforcement of laws, at the national level. At the international level, there was a need for further commitment in securing universal access to education and reproductive health services to provide equal opportunity for women and girls and freedom from discrimination and violence.

50. **Ms. Ekans** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that for decades FAO had promoted the advancement of rural women and gender equality in agriculture and rural development. The supportive and proactive role of FAO governing bodies had been critical to the achievements made to date. Both the contents and the process of development of the current corporate action plan reflected the conclusions and recommendations on the status of gender mainstreaming within FAO. The plan aimed at institutionalizing gender equality within the organization's policies, procedures, programme planning and staff development and training.

51. At the institutional level, the Gender and Population Division served as the corporate focal point for gender mainstreaming and represented FAO in inter-agency task forces. The Division also produced an electronic newsletter and provided policy advice technical assistance and capacity-building in member States.

52. She outlined six measures necessary for anchoring the gender mainstreaming strategy in the administration of the organization itself and concluded by reiterating the need to convince FAO technical staff, management and member States that the investment in time and resources for gender analysis and mainstreaming actually led to improved well-being for rural populations.

53. **Ms. Sonaike** (Nigeria) welcomed the attempt to implement the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 as reported in document E/2004/59, and urged the Secretary-General to appoint more women to high-level posts in the Organization, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

54. It was encouraging that most United Nations entities had developed policies on gender equality, which used gender mainstreaming as the major strategy for achieving their goals, but the gap between policy and practice remained a major cause for concern. His delegation believed that capacity-building would

strongly benefit from the enhanced and full participation of women, including as decision makers within the United Nations.

55. In recognition of the role of women as partners in development, Nigeria sought to promote equal treatment of women in all aspects of life and, in that regard, attached great importance to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and peace and security.

56. **Mr. Løvald** (Observer for Norway) recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action had endorsed gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for achieving gender equality, and that the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 later translated mainstreaming into a strategy for the entire United Nations system. Substantial progress had been made in recent years, and he supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General that improved mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and accountability were key issues. All staff members of United Nations bodies must share responsibility for effective mainstreaming of gender issues into their work.

57. Similarly, member States should take action to implement gender mainstreaming strategies. Member States could also have a direct impact through participation in the governing bodies of agencies, funds and programmes, ensuring that increased attention was paid to gender equality in policy formulation. In addition, governments must demand specific results and hold United Nations entities accountable for the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies. Accountability also entailed providing resources for policy implementation; allocations for gender specialists should, in the long term, be incorporated into ordinary budgets.

58. He noted that monitoring of gender mainstreaming was often carried out in the form of specific gender assessments, audits and evaluations but said that the ultimate goal should be the inclusion of a gender perspective in ordinary evaluations and reporting processes.

59. **Ms. Dairiam** (Malaysia) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59). Mainstreaming a gender perspective into the policies and programmes of the United Nations would have a synergistic effect on the advancement of women at the national level. However, a gap remained between the policy and its implementation. The demands associated with

mainstreaming could conflict with existing institutional procedures and practices which were male-dominated and biased towards men. When gender was interpreted to mean merely the inclusion of women, and was imposed on men who did not see the point of it, mainstreaming could be seen as taking time away from "real work" and could cause resentment. Unless it was made clear why, for instance, the water sector or industrial policies had to be sensitive to women's interests, the demand for mainstreaming could be ignored. It was relatively easy to promote the advancement of women where the mandate of an organization matched gender concerns, but the goal of equality had to become an essential component in all organizations regardless of their mandates.

60. There was an urgent need for consistency in mainstreaming efforts, especially now that a number of interventions for the advancement of women had taken place, including follow-up plans arising out of the world conferences on women and the Millennium Development Goals. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was a key standard-setting instrument, but was not used effectively by multilateral agencies and national institutions. Efforts to promote the advancement of women would be enhanced if the Convention's normative standards were more widely used and if mainstreaming was monitored as part of the treaty monitoring process.

61. Since State structures were not monolithic, a common understanding was needed of the sources of women's inequality and of gender relations in specific situations. Gender concerns were all too likely to disappear in a complex entity such as the United Nations Development Programme, with its regional and country offices and its various executing agencies.

62. The international community should continue to support and strengthen institutions specifically designed to promote mainstreaming, which were essential in setting standards and ensuring conceptual clarity. At the national level, awareness-raising was a prerequisite for mainstreaming. Government agencies, relevant institutions, the private sector and civil society should all be made aware of their responsibility to secure women's rights.

63. **Ms. Van Dounen Litter** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that mainstreaming was a necessary part of the organization's commitment to health for all. The benefits of health interventions, for both men and women, could be enhanced through an

understanding of the impact of gender roles and unequal gender relations on access to health services. In March 2002 WHO had adopted a policy on integrating gender into its work. Most of the mainstreaming work was done by its Department of Gender and Women's Health. The Department of Reproductive Health and Research also had a unit on gender and reproductive rights, and the six WHO regional offices had focal points or units dealing with gender and women's health. Those issues were also covered by the departments responsible for HIV/AIDS, violence and injury prevention, tropical diseases, child and adolescent health, non-communicable diseases and mental health, and health and human rights. In its 3-by-5 initiative, which sought to expand access to anti-retroviral drugs for people with AIDS, special attention was being paid to access for women. The organization participated regularly in inter-agency initiatives, such as the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, and provided input on gender and sexual and reproductive health to the human rights treaty bodies, to the follow-up processes for the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Declaration, and to the Commission on the Status of Women.

64. A number of operational challenges remained for WHO: gender was often misunderstood as being synonymous with "women" or as merely a staffing issue, and public health terminology did not yet carry the appropriate messages. Suitable tools were now being developed for health programmers, and steps were being taken to ensure that health data were disaggregated for sex, in order to highlight trends in mortality and morbidity for a range of health conditions. Another priority was to develop mechanisms to integrate gender issues more consistently into the work of WHO.

65. **Mr. Jury** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that the mission of WFP was to provide access to food for hungry men, women and children in situations of chronic food insecurity, thus contributing to the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people suffering from hunger by the year 2015. In 2002 it had adopted a gender policy based on the implementation of its Policy Commitments to Women 1996-2001, and on the experience of partner agencies. The gender policy emphasized the role of women in household food security and aimed to close gender gaps among food aid beneficiaries in the field. The policy was implemented through guidelines, the collection of survey data, training at regional and country levels, and field-based research. The

Commitments to Women had now become the Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECWs). They focused on giving women more control in distributions of relief food, supporting girls in their secondary school education and out-of-school training, providing food-assisted training, especially for women and girls, practising advocacy for the role of women in household food security, increasing the numbers of female staff, especially in humanitarian assistance operations, and including women and children affected by HIV/AIDS in its operations.

66. WFP was conducting baseline surveys of the implementation of its Enhanced Commitments in 30 to 40 countries, and would follow up the results. Its Gender Unit had piloted ECW training modules at regional and country level. It would be seeking to identify good practices in measures to contribute to the empowerment of women, and would conduct field-based research on the impact of the ECWs from the viewpoint of beneficiaries. Gender perspectives had been mainstreamed into both sectoral policies and operational sectors, and the cost of implementing the gender policy had been incorporated into the organization's Management Plan for 2004-2005. The numbers of female staff had risen by 70 per cent since 1993, and now represented over 38 per cent of international staff and 40 per cent of national staff. WFP was now mainstreaming gender into its vulnerability analysis and mapping procedures. Some difficulties remained: the collection of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information was hampered by a lack of resources, and gender mainstreaming in emergency policies and responses tended to lag behind. In the Enhanced Commitments to Women, special emphasis was being placed on the empowerment of women. The organization would continue to collaborate with other agencies to ensure that mainstreaming was pursued in the longer term.

67. **Ms. Davtyan** (Armenia) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (E/2004/59). It was clear that gender mainstreaming was a major strategy not only for implementing the Beijing Programme of Action, but also for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was also an indispensable means of bringing about sustainable development. Welcoming the proposals to integrate a gender perspective into all United Nations programmes, she emphasized the need for such a perspective in development policies and in operational activities. She was pleased to note the increasing attention being paid to gender issues in all United Nations bodies, including the Security Council. It would be useful to further strengthen the dialogue on

gender mainstreaming between the Bureau of the Council and its functional commissions. A gender perspective should also be incorporated into the 2005 review and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Commission on the Status of Women, which had a catalytic role in giving practical guidance in that respect, should be brought fully into the review process.

68. **Mr. Musliu** (Association for Democratic Initiatives (ADI)) said that ADI was a Macedonian non-governmental organization which coordinated the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network in its subregion. In cooperation with the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, it had developed a cross-border pilot project on establishing institutional mechanisms for gender equality at local level, based on ethnically diverse localities in Macedonia and Bulgaria. The project aimed to establish a public council on gender equality in three municipalities in each country, and to create a pilot model for gender equality structures at local level. Because of the lack of disaggregated data, it had been necessary to conduct a cross-border sociological survey on gender issues. Research had been carried out in public institutions, public and private companies, ministries and schools in the six municipalities, and a report published on the findings. Meetings had been held with municipal representatives, local NGOs, political parties, local media and civil society representatives to introduce the project and share ideas. Round tables had been held in each of the selected municipalities, involving local authority representatives, members of Parliament, NGOs and journalists. ADI was also holding gender awareness meetings every month in its own premises. The project was expected to result in new legislation and institutional mechanisms, and also to make local government more gender-aware. Although legislation in both Macedonia and Bulgaria imposed formal equality between men and women, for the process of democratization to be complete more women were needed to serve in public office. The role of non-governmental organizations was to foster the active participation of women in political activities. ADI was working with the political parties to ensure gender equality in the selection of candidates for the forthcoming local elections. Article 18 of the new law on local elections envisaged that 30 per cent of candidates for municipal office should be of a different gender.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.